



Insight

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Have a happy holiday

This time of year is about family, caring and giving. It's a time to pause and appreciate the abundance and goodness of what we have as Americans in a world where many go to bed each night hungry and in fear. As Soldiers, Army civilians and contractors serving in a time of war, we celebrate this holiday season with traditional observances and decorations as a gesture of good will, hope for greater peace and prosperity, and encouragement for the almost 900 INSCOM and over 130,000 US military personnel deployed away from their families this holiday season. They're counting on us for continued wartime support and to carry on the traditions of the season. We honor our great Nation and comrades-in-arms by rededicating ourselves to the core values, morals, and positive outlook that make America and its Army a beacon of light to less fortunate people worldwide.

Because so many service

members remain deployed away from home this year, I encourage each of you to reach deep and do what you can to say "thanks" and show support. Each of you does that daily through your dedication to the military mission, but there are other programs available I'd ask you to consider, such as: *Operation Hero Miles* - helps troops travel home during R&R periods; *Operation USA Care Package* - sends our Soldiers gifts from home; *Gifts from the Homefront* - gives our folks AAFES gift certificates that can be used in PXs and BXs; and many others. INSCOM is also sponsoring an initiative to forward knapsacks full of school supplies to disadvantaged Iraqi school children through deployed INSCOM Soldiers. This helps Iraq build for the future and enhances Soldier-Iraqi relations which assist with force protection. Contact your local public affairs representatives (or INSCOM PAO) for details on any or all of



DA photo

these.

Thanks for all you do for our Army and nation - it's a privilege to serve with INSCOM professionals around the globe. You're making America safer and the world a better place to live.

Enjoy this 2004 Holiday Season. Be safe - don't drink and drive; wear seatbelts; and take care of each other. We need every one of you for continued success in 2005.

Maj. Gen. John F. Kimmons

Open Season

The Thrift Savings Plan Open Season has been extended through Jan. 3, 2005. Those interested can use the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) on the ABC-C homepage (<https://www.abc.army.mil>) or through the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) by dialing 1-877-276-9287. Benefit Counselors are available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m CT (excluding federal holidays).

66th has reason to celebrate



photo by 1st Sgt. Charles Ross

The Feliciano sisters tell Santa what they want for Christmas during the 2nd MI Battalion's holiday party, Dec. 4.

by Pfc. Kari Jennings

66th MI Group

Soldiers, families and "wounded warriors" of the 2nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 66th MI Group celebrated at the battalion's holiday party in Darmstadt, Germany, Dec. 4.

The unit's senior leaders worked hard to create a warm family atmosphere that also appealed to the single Soldiers in the unit.

Many single Soldiers were in attendance and each received goodie bags with phone cards, books, and treats.

The family readiness groups provided gingerbread houses, face painting and a movie corner to keep the children - and some adults -

busy. Santa Claus and an elf made a special visit and posed for pictures with the children.

The battalion also welcomed two Soldiers - 1st Lt. Joseph Coleman and Pfc. Paul Zorio - recently released from the hospital after treatment for injuries sustained while in combat in Iraq.

Zorio was wounded, treated and released only two days before the party. "It's a big change from where I was a week ago," he said. "With members of the Darmstadt community deployed and others preparing for future deployments, we are all trying to support our troops. As a Soldier back from the frontlines, we really appreciate this."

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Kraus settles into new role

by Sgt. 1st Class Terry Goodman
INSCOM Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command's deputy commanding general has had a window in her office only twice during her 30-year military intelligence career. Fortunately, her restricted "view" of the world doesn't prevent her from seeing the possibilities of serving the nation as a reserve Soldier and maintaining a career as an Army civilian.

Throughout her adult life, Col. Julia A. Kraus has balanced several jobs simultaneously. Some people might find this schedule difficult to maintain, but for the single parent of a college-bound son, the constant balancing act is just life as she knows it.

Kraus began her military career in 1975 after she graduated from Michigan's Olivet College. Kraus' father, Paul, an Army veteran who served with the 1086th Signal Corps during World War II, told her it was time to make up her mind about the future.

Kraus thought about joining the FBI, but found the agency required two years of investigative experience. Kraus discovered that she could get investigative experience in the Army's Criminal Investigation Command.

"I contacted CID, only to find that in order to be an agent, I needed to join the MPs (military police) for two years," said the South Haven, Mich. native.

Kraus decided to enlist in the MP Corps. Unfortunately, an administrative mishap kept that from happening when the recruiting station misplaced her paperwork. Eager to join the military, and unwilling to wait on additional red-tape, Kraus resolved to let fate guide her. Spotting recruiting posters of Soldiers in the tropics, she asked a local recruiter what was available in Hawaii.

Fate came through in an exceptional manner. Quickly, Kraus completed basic training and then Advance Individual Training (AIT) as a finance Soldier. While at AIT, she seized the opportunity to submit an Officer Candidate School (OCS) packet and was selected to attend OCS at Fort Benning, Ga., following the completion of her overseas tour in Hawaii.

Two years later, in June 1977, as planned, Kraus found herself at "the home of the Infantry" for 14 weeks of training to become an officer.

"When I went to OCS, it was the initial, trial class for integrating women into the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Fort Benning," she said. "Of the 16 females who started, only seven graduated. Each of us was given a different branch. I got MI (Military Intelligence)."

Following graduation, she continued to call Fort Benning home. Kraus' first assignment was at the 179th MI Detachment, 197th Infantry Brigade where she served as an imag-



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Col. Julia Kraus is the new INSCOM deputy commanding general.

ery interpretation leader and brigade tactical surveillance officer.

Kraus continued on active duty, moving from Georgia to Europe where she became an intelligence production manager for US Army Europe, 7th Army, in Heidelberg, Germany.

In 1984, Kraus again decided to change her path, and left active duty to join the Army Reserve. She was immediately accepted into the MI Group, 7th US Army Reserve Command, Germany.

Kraus doesn't look back and hasn't slowed down. When not in uniform, she is an intelligence research specialist at the Army Material Command's Tank, Automotive and Armaments Command in Warren, Mich.

Kraus has served during mobilizations for Operation Joint Endeavor (from 1997 through 1998) and more re-

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Check 21 takes effect

ARLINGTON, Va. — Financial institutions are preparing to meet new federal laws affecting cancelled checks.

In October 2003, Congress passed new check clearing legislation, known as Check 21. The goal of this federal legislation is to improve the nation's check payment system and the way banks process checks.

Today, checks are physically transported from one bank to another for processing. Check 21 allows banks to create and transmit electronic images of those checks through secure means. The image can then be used to create a substitute check using digital images of the original check.

A substitute check is the legal equivalent of the original and replaces the original. Transmitting digital substitute checks makes check processing more efficient and supports

modernization of additional processes.

Substitute checks are similar in size to original checks with a slightly reduced image of the front and back of the original. The front of a substitute check states: "This is a legal copy of your check. You can use it the same way you would use the original check." Banks may use a substitute check as proof of payment just like the original check.

As of this past October, every bank in the United States will be required to accept substitute checks. When checks are processed, they may be converted to substitute checks.

Those individuals who currently receive cancelled checks in their monthly statement, may notice some of the cancelled checks are returned in the new substitute check

format. Those who do not receive cancelled checks should experience little or no change as a result of Check 21.

While all banks are required to accept substitute checks, not all checks will be converted. Therefore, some people may see a combination of substitute and original checks in their statements.

As check clearing efficiencies improve because of these changes, some may begin to see checks post to their bank account more quickly.

Community banks operated by Bank of America for military overseas banking customers will be phasing this new change into the overseas locations within the next 12 months. More information will be provided to installations, as it is available.

For additional information about Check 21, please contact your local financial institution.

Tax time

ARLINGTON, Va. - The end of the calendar year is quickly approaching and that means only one thing in the tax world, tax statements (W-2, 1099R).

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has compiled a schedule of dates when service members, military retirees and annuitants and defense civilian employees can access their tax statements through myPay and when they can anticipate to receive the hardcopy delivery by mail.

Military members, retirees/annuitants and Department of Defense civilian employees will once again have access to view, save and print their tax statements from myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

DFAS delivers personal pay information and provides the ability to process pay-related transactions timely, safely and securely to all its members through myPay. The Web-based system eliminates the risks associated with postal delivery by allowing members to access electronic tax statements and other financial information online. myPay matches existing industry standards for the highest level of encryption and security. This prevents customer information from being accessed by others on the Internet.

Fort Gordon troops visit school

by Staff Sgt. Terrence Hayes
116th MI Group

Seven Fort Gordon Soldiers visited an Aiken, S.C. middle school in observance of Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

The Soldiers participated in a Veterans Day forum televised throughout Schofield Middle School.

During the forum, Soldiers were asked questions such as what affect has Sept. 11, 2001, had on the Army, what does it mean to serve during a time of war, and what were some of the highlights of their career.

One of the topics of discussion during the forum was "what is patriotism?" Staff Sgt. Tracy Thomas, administrative specialist, 297th Military Intelligence Battalion, 116th MI Group, said it's important that everyone understand the meaning of patriotism.

"Patriotism is seeing children like you taking advantage of the freedoms veterans have sacrificed their lives for," Thomas said. "Getting your education is one of the most patriotic things you can do now."

But, of all topics, the one that hit home the most was "what was the happiest moment you've had in your career?" This topic struck Capt. Robert Lentner, commander, Company C, 73rd Ordnance Battalion.

"I remember returning from the Gulf War and seeing

my wife," he said. "The hug we shared was like nothing I've ever felt before. I will always remember that moment."

After the forum, Soldiers visited classrooms and answered questions the children had about the Army. They even signed autographs and took pictures with students and faculty members.

Allison Hollimon, a 6th grade teacher at Schofield Middle, said she thinks the children have a better feel for the military now because of the visit.

"I think this is a great

thing," she said. "I think it's a great opportunity for them to hear what the Army does and what Soldiers go through. I don't think they truly understand, but maybe they'll be able to grasp this visit more down the road."

Hollimon added that this visit displays what Veterans Day is all about.

"Sacrifice," she said. "These Soldiers sacrificed their day off - a day away from family - to visit our children and discuss very important issues. I believe the visit was well-worth it and hope the children cherish this for ever."



photo by Staff Sgt. Terrence Hayes

Staff Sgt. Tracy Thomas, a 297th Military Intelligence Battalion administrative specialist, spends Veterans Day with Schofield Middle School students. The Aiken, S.C. school invited several Fort Gordon Soldiers to participate in their televised Veterans Day tribute special aired throughout the school.

NGIC earns lifetime award

by Maj. William Anderson
National Ground Intelligence Center

The National Ground Intelligence Center received a lifetime achievement award from the Intelink Management Office for "pushing the envelope of Web services and innovative ways to manage its intelligence" at an NGIC award ceremony on Oct. 1.

"This group has come up with more ideas to advance the state-of-the-art than many larger organizations," said John Brantley, director, Intelink Management Office.

The NGIC was one of six organizations identified as consistent innovators in new web content management and high-quality intelligence products as part of the annual Intelink Conference.

"The NGIC received this award for many reasons, and more importantly, because of the work of many people," said William Crislip, director of information management, NGIC, as he presented a crystal globe and framed certificate to Col. Terry Schmaltz, deputy commander, NGIC. "Everyone at NGIC has contributed in his or her own way to the positive image for which the award was given."

NGIC is known for producing high-interest intelligence assessments based upon quality analytical effort. The center's leaders believe the award is a direct reflection of the quality analysis done in their four directorates.



photo by Julie Lucas

NGIC received a lifetime achievement award from the Intelink Management Office during a ceremony, Oct. 1.

Crislip said the NGIC Web site was also recognized as leading the way in applying current rendering and content management applications, often far ahead of other sites.

"This leadership largely reflects the outstanding effort of members of the Advanced Intelligence Production Office, which keeps NGIC focused on the way ahead," he said.

He added that praise also reflects reliable operations of both server and communication connectivity for deployed users on all three NGIC websites as maintained by the Information Technology staff and contractors.

Crislip pointed out that content management is also a strength based upon reliable web posting, error correction management, consistent use of metadata, strong document markup including special features, and an active customer interaction as conducted by the Information Management staff.

Concluding his remarks, Crislip said "the NGIC is viewed as a top-quality team player and an innovative organization in the Intelligence Community, and there probably isn't a single person in NGIC who didn't contribute to this award in some way."

Some gift giving guidance

by Lt. Col. Harrold McCracken
INSCOM Judge Advocate

There are a number of restrictions on getting or giving gifts in the federal workplace, here are just a few, common problem areas:

Gifts between employees:

In general, an employee may not give, or solicit a contribution for, a gift to an official superior, and may not accept a gift from an employee receiving less pay if the employee is a subordinate. But, during the holidays, employees may give the following to an official superior: items, other than cash, valued at \$10 or less; items such as food and refreshments to be shared in the office; and personal hospitality provided at a residence which is of a type and value customarily provided by the employee to personal friends.

Gifts from outside sources:

Generally an employee may not solicit or accept a gift given because of his official position or from a prohibited source to include anyone who: has or seeks official action or business with the agency; is regulated by the agency; has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance of an employee's official duties; or is an organization composed mainly of such persons. A "gift" under these policies generally does not include items such as publicly available discounts and prizes, commercial loans, food not part of a meal such as coffee and donuts, and items of little value such as plaques and greeting cards.

What's acceptable:

An employee generally may accept: gifts based on a personal relationship when it is

clear that the motivation is not his official position; gifts of \$20 or less per occasion, not to exceed \$50 in a year from one source; discounts and similar benefits offered to a broad class, including a broad class of government employees; free attendance, food, refreshments and materials provided at a conference or widely attended gathering or certain other social events which an employee attends in his official capacity, with approval from a supervisor. An employee should return gifts not meeting the exceptions or contact his or her supervisor on how to dispose of them. Perishable items may be given to charity or shared by the office, with approval from the Agency Ethics Counselor.

For additional information, contact Lt. Col. Harrold McCracken at 703-706-1246.

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cently in support of INSCOM's mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism. Taking it all in stride, her assignments are all a part of the continuously shifting career road she's chosen to travel.

The Army War College graduate states that there have been significant changes in the way MI Soldiers perform their duties in her 30-year career as a military intelligence Soldier.

"When I began my career as a second lieutenant, we used slide rules and computers were the size of a room," she said. "We didn't

have copy machines or hand-held anything."

Kraus said, the joint environment that exists today was not even thought about three decades ago, nor was intelligence shared between services or other agencies.

"It was a much simpler world," she said. "We knew who our enemy was, and they had a face, a name, and a place."

These changes, like the ones before them, are not enough to deter her. They are simply part of life as lived by Julia Kraus.

(Kraus is awaiting Senate confirmation of her promotion to brigadier general).

Help is on the way

U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command employees with SIPRNET access have a new resource available - a personnel locator tool (found at: <http://www.inscom.army.smil.mil>). The locator tool is the first INSCOM application to use the command's new Core Database, which includes all civilian, military and contractor employees in the command.